

each of the three museums, with exhibition galleries and curatorial offices around it. "We are giving almost equal weight to study centers and galleries," says Lentz. "We asked ourselves, 'What is it we can do that other people can't? What are we really good at?' and time and time again we came back to the Mongan Center and the Busch-Reisinger study center as models."

The Fogg's Mongan Center is a collaborative joining of three curatorial departments—prints, drawings, and photography—which share a support staff and a fairly large room in which their treasures may be spread upon tables, looked at, and even handled by visitors, under supervision. Any member of the public without an obvious screw loose may go there, ask to see the Dürer drawings, and have them fetched for viewing. Students arrive in droves with their teachers. "The Mongan Center model is the key to our future," says Lentz.

Lentz is excited about the collaboration the restructuring should fos-

ter. "For example," he says, "there are huge visual, intellectual, and programmatic links between the Sackler departments of ancient, Asian, and Islamic and later Indian art, but these departments don't interact with one another as they should. They're essentially in silos. I need them in a more collaborative structure. The more we can work across fields and disciplines, the more we'll see the kinds of ideas that we should be seeing from a museum that has a huge amount of intellectual and research muscle."

Stephan Wolohojian, a curator in the department of European paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts, says that all of the curators are "interested in exploring the idea of putting these study centers at the core of the museums. It's one of our biggest challenges, since there is no model, either in a major civic museum or at another university."

"For the curators of works on paper, a study-center model is familiar," says William Robinson, Abrams curator of drawings and head of curatorial affairs, a sort of buffer between the director and the curators. "Curators with three-dimensional objects will have to make some prac-

tical and mental readjustments." Some are cautious. Asian art objects have been shown to visitors infrequently and with the utmost care, and, says Robinson, "there are good reasons for that. Unrolling scrolls and moving large pieces of priceless ceramic—it's specialized work, and perhaps it's also important that anyone presenting these objects know Asian languages. Under the new model, a visitor will see a vase in an exhibition gallery and ring the study-center bell to ask, 'Do you have any more of those?' Other examples will be brought into the study center." This will make valuable use of the permanent collection. And the museum will need a new staff of professional art handlers.

"Everyone endorses the idea of greater access to the collections," says Robinson. "The study-center model is daring and presents many new avenues to learning. There's nothing like leafing through a sketchbook, or turning over a drawing to see what's on the back—things one can't do in a gallery."

"We assume," says Lentz, "that you can learn certain things in the classroom, and certain things in the exhibition gallery, but



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**Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**

## A Saudi Prince's Controversial Gift

**Prince** Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, reportedly the richest member of the Saudi royal family and head of the investment firm Kingdom Holding Company, has given \$20 million each to Harvard and to Georgetown University, those institutions announced in December. Almost immediately, the press reported unhappiness that the gifts had been accepted.

Harvard will use the gift, which was initiated by the prince, to create the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program, a University-wide project run by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in close coordination with the Divinity School. The money will fund four new professorships, one known as the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal chair in contemporary Islamic thought and life, and provide support for graduate students. It will also launch a \$1-million initiative within the University Library, the Islamic Heritage Project, that will digitize historically significant Islamic materials and make the resulting images, including digitized texts of the classics of the Islamic tradition, available on the Internet.

Islamic studies at Harvard are currently found within disciplines ranging from religion, history, and law to art and literature. The prince's gift will make it possible to add strength in the history of science and in new areas such as Islamic Inner-Asian, Southeast Asian, or South Asian studies. "For a university with global aspirations, it is critical that Harvard have a strong program on Islam that is worldwide and interdisciplinary in scope," said provost Steven E. Hyman, who will coordinate the new program's implementation.

A sampling of the opposition, much of it indicative of the divided opinions on the Middle East and concern about terrorism, came from Washington: "Accepting money from a member of the royal family legitimizes the regime," wrote Suzanne Gershowitz '04 of the American Enterprise Institute in *National Review*. "[M]uch of the concern about Islam and the Arab world is in fact a justified reaction to that world's uncomfortable realities, such as the oppression of women, Islamist incitement, and apology for terror. But universities—and especially Georgetown and Harvard—are not the place to find this sort of distaste. Their classrooms, and especially Middle Eastern-studies departments, tend instead to amplify anti-American rhetoric, legitimize conspiracy theories, and, in the name of cultural relativism, gloss over the oppression that exists in the Arab world."